

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 01430 131313Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1248
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEHRAN 1430

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA, IR, TC
SUBJ: ALLEGED IRANIAN THREATS AGAINST UAE

REF: STATE 032731, JIDDA 1187

1. WE ASSUME PRINCE SAUD'S ALLEGATION HAS IN MIND SPECIFIC THREATS TO UAE WHICH GO BEYOND GENERALIZED STATEMENT BY SHAH (IN INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH TELEVISION PUBLISHED JANUARY 29, TEHRAN 0908) THAT "OVERPRODUCTION" BY SAUDI ARABIA OR UAE "IS AN ACT OF AGGRESSION" AGAINST IRAN. THAT COMMENT, PROMINENTLY PLAYED AS IT WAS IN IRANIAN PRESS, CAUSED A BIT OF LOCAL FUROR HERE, BUT WE GATHER FROM JIDDA'S REPORTING WAS LARGELY SHRUGGED OFF BY SAUDI ARABIANS (JIDDA 0878). EMBASSY HAS NO INFORMATION REGARDING ANY MORE SPECIFIC THREAT.

2. DESPITE HIN OF URGENCY IN PRINCE SAUD'S REPRESENTATION TO AMBASSADOR PORTER, WE FIND IT INCONCEIVABLE IN PRACTICAL TERMS THAT IRAN SHOULD SPECIFICALLY THREATEN, MUCH LESS CARRY OUT, ANY MILITARY ACTION AGAINST UAE. RANGE OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL MOVES ALSO SEEMS LIMITED FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, SINCE UAE IS NOT PARTICULARLY DEPENDENT ON SHAH IN ANY SPECIFIC WAY, FINANCIAL OR OTHERWISE.

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PERHAPS SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR HURTING UAE IN OIL MARKET-ING, AT PRESENT OR IN THE FUTURE, WOULD EXIST--BUT DEPARTMENT IS BETTER JUDGE OF THAT THAN WE.

3. THIS BRINGS US BY PROCESS OF ELIMINATION TO CONCLUSION THAT ANY THREAT DELIVERED BY IRAN, THROUGH WHATEVER CHANNEL, WOULD PROBABLY BE CAREFULLY ENCASED IN AMBIVA-

LENCE, SUCH AS "NOT KNOWING WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE."
SHAH IS QUITE OBVIOUSLY ENGAGING IN A WAR OF NERVES OVER
OPEC PRICE SYSTEM, AND BEING MORE DIRECT WITH SMALL,
WEAKER COUNTRIES SUCH AS UAE WOULD NOT BE INCONCEIVABLE
IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. ABOUT THE ONLY THREAT WE KNOW SHAH HAS REPEATEDLY
MADE IS THAT SHORTFALL OF OIL INCOME MIGHT CAUSE IRAN
TO PAY LESS ATTENTION TO THE SECURITY OF THE GULF. SUCH
A GENERALIZED THREAT STRIKES US AS AIMED MORE AT THE US
AND WESTERN OIL COMPANIES THAN AT IRAN'S ARAB GULF
NEIGHBORS WHO, SHAH MUST KNOW, ARE NOT ENTIRELY PREPARED
TO ACCEPT SHAH AS THE DEFENDER OF THEIR OIL LIFELINE.

5. THIS STILL LEAVES QUESTION OF THE PROPRIETY OF A
THREAT AGAINST A WEAK ARAB GULF COUNTRY IN TERMS OF OPEC
BROTHERHOOD, AND INDEED COOPERATION OF SAUDI ARABIA WITH
IRAN. OBVIOUSLY, BEFORE WE ENGAGE OURSELVES IN DOING
ANYTHING ABOUT SAUDI REQUEST TO US, WE SHOULD CONSIDER
WHETHER USG WISHES TO BE DRAWN INTO INTRA-OPEC DIFFERENCES
AT THIS POINT IN TIME. EVEN AN INQUIRY TO IRANIANS ON
THIS ALLEGED THREAT CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE TAKEN BY THEM
AS ANOTHER BIT OF THE EVIDENCE THEY ARE SEEKING OF USG
COLLUSION WITH SAUDIS TO HURT IRANIAN OIL INTERESTS AND
PERHAPS "BREAK OPEC." WHILE THERE MAY BE TIMES WHEN USG
CAN SERVE USEFUL PURPOSE IN FACILITATING COMMUNICATIONS
BETWEEN OUR TWO MAJOR FRIENDS ON THE GULF, SAUDI ARABIA
AND IRAN, WE WONDER IF THIS IS ONE.

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6. ADDRESSEE COMMENTS AND DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS ARE
WELCOME.
MIKLOS

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